Opinion

Vernal Express

OPINION

PAYING THE PRICE FOR SELLING TO MINORS

BY KEVIN ASHBY
Express Publisher

There should be little patience shown when it comes to the sale of alcohol to youth in our area and I felt the Vernal City Council said what needed to be said to managers of stores who had employees who sold to underage buyers.

It all started out when Mayer Mashburn and police chief Gary Jensen made a personal visit to each of the stores in Vernal with a license to sell alcoholic beverages to inform them they were going to check the stores using a couple of underage teenagers to see if they had employees selling alcohol to minors. They made the courtesy visit to not only inform, but to discuss the problems associated with selling alcoholic beverages to minors.

And then, after being forewarned came the slap in the face with half the stores failing the check. Afterwards and not surprising, there was a day of reckoning with the city council to review whether or not they should have their license revoked or suspended.

It was interesting that next in the process came the excuses rather than the solutions. Store managers blamed the problem of selling to minors on ill-trained help, or not enough help.

I agree that we are all hurting for good employees. We have had several openings here at the newspaper that we haven't been able to fill in over a year, I understand the problems associated with finding good help. But! Even with bad employees, or ill-trained staff, these are some serious laws being broken that can have major financial impacts.

In the end the business managers and owners are responsible that they don't sell alcohol to minors. They should be training and checking their own employees for compliance. What is funny in this whole ordeal is that every store clerk checked for ID. Half of them just forgot to notice the red or blue expiration date on the Utah License that identifies them the person as a minor.

The laws are clear and store owners and managers need to make sure their store is in compliance.

In the end, the Vernal City Council and Mayor made it very clear that they were not going to tolerate alcohol sales to minors. They suspended the license of one store and they said that they would do it again after the next check. And yes! They said there would be another check. They also pointed out that there are two licenses controlled by the city - one dealing with the sale of alcohol and the other being the actual business license.

We live in a society that agrees that there is no benefit that comes from letting minors drink alcoholic beverages. In fact, there is a long list of why we shouldn't even go there. As a society, let's help our youth understand that underage drinking brings with it what is usually ugly consequences that they can live without.

The Vernal mayor and city council understand the problems associated with underage drinking and I support them for taking a strong stand. Business owners, let's do our part even at the peril of losing employees. That will be better than losing one of your licenses.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

I wish to express my deepest thanks to all who helped make my recent book, "A Narrative History of Uintah County," so successful. I want to give sincere appreciation to Dr. Robert Behunin and his staff at the Utah State University, as it was through them that this book became a reality. I am ever so grateful to Jenna Beede and Joe Hunting for their time and patience in showing and helping me with all the computer work involved. Also, I am thankful to Marilyn Manwaring and all the office personnel for being so very helpful and considerate to my needs.

I will always feel indebted to the late Jim Abbeglan, for it was through him when as a county commissioner that I got this book started. He gave me the push to get these stories in print and introduced me to those at the university who thought is was a good idea. Jim was indeed a fine man and a devoted friend.

Last but not least, I want to give thanks to all who have supported me in anyway and for their purchasing this book. I am sorry that we ran out of printed editions and hopefully there will soon be more for anyone wanting some and especially those who made pledges to obtain them. You are all very special friends.
Sincerely,

George Long, Vernal

Web opinion poll

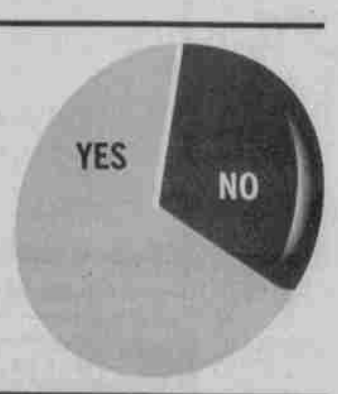
Each week the *Vernal Express* offers an online poll to its readers. To participate in the poll, visit www.vernal.com and click on the opinion link. Polls are not scientific and represent the opinions of voluntary Internet users. New polls are posted weekly and printed results represent voting as of Tuesday morning. If you have an idea for an opinion poll, e-mail it to editor@vernal.com.

Results for this week

Did you enjoy this year's Uintah County Fair?

a) Yes (67%)
b) No (33%)

This question will run for one more week.



BERTHA BUTTERBEAN

Olympic gold—is it worth it?

DANA COLOVICH
Guest Writer

I guess that having the Olympic Games is good for world unity. And I guess it's good that the athletes have a chance to be on the "world's stage" and make history. You don't have to be in Beijing to see them do it either.

With television coverage, the internet, and a few other media formats, you can "be there" while all of this Olympic history happens, live or delayed by only a little bit.

There's a problem with all of this up-close-and-personal participation, though. It's the kids. I now have about ten Olympic hopefuls—grandchildren who have picked their sports, set their goals and begun practicing the duly required number of hours per day. It's driving everyone crazy though.

Some of their sports require complicated and expensive equipment, the kind that is only to be found in Olympic training centers. But that doesn't stop them. They improvise. And they help each other.

For instance, the two-year old thinks that he is now a springboard diver. Yes, he got to practice his skills at the pool. It was great. Mom was there to catch him and of course he didn't drown. He is getting the "double-lean, two-and-a-half hesitation crouch" down pretty well. He could stand to work on his entry, though. It's not too clean yet.

Okay and all, but his parents aren't yet ready to make the commitment that can take him to the next level. They need some more time to decide whether they want to change their place of residence to the rec center swimming pool.

So, during the interim, he has to practice at home. His improvised diving board is the couch which has plenty of spring, and he works out on it every chance he gets.

During one session, he watched the TV closely while a diver took a flying leap. and then he "copied" the dive. He showed good elevation and nice form for the first try. But it's the entry; he still needs to work on the entry.

He suffered his first sports-related injury, and took a trip to the doctor, during which visit his form and sportsmanship were terrible, but I am sure he will be back in training in a couple of weeks, after the brace comes off the ankle.

Another grandchild caught the first-ever BMX bike racing Olympic event. "Now that looks like a sport!" She and her friend became the dynamic duo of the neighborhood. (They are eight now. By 2012 they should look old enough to compete.)

So they improvised with the gear for that, too. They used boards on the curbs for jumps. For their protective clothing, they dug helmets out of the closet and found their winter coats, snow boots, snow pants and mittens. Their mothers' volleyball kneepads and some swimming goggles completed the cover-up.

Now I don't know whether real bmx clothing has its own built-in cooling system, but the ninety-degree temperatures last week made it pretty difficult for the two of them to get in much training before they had to stop for water and a cool-down. In fact, a couple of times around the track like that and they were done with the gear.

About that time a third Olympic trainee needed a board to hold down his soccer net. So the BMXers, sans gear, crash and burn when they next shoot the curb. I could understand that accident if they still had their goggles on. The last I heard were these words: "Waaaaaaaaah. No, don't clean it."

Not long after that, the soccer hopeful slide tackles the board behind his net and thereafter needs medical assistance in the form of a few stitches to hold his knee together.

The "Olympic phenomena," which is Butterbean for the increased incidence of visits to the ER during the month of August on leap years, sort of gives a whole new meaning to the term "Olympic Gold." Dad may have to pawn his watch to pay the medical bills.

Public Forum - Letters to the Editor

What is your opinion? The *Vernal Express* welcomes letters from its readers concerning any subject pertinent to the Uintah Basin. There are no restrictions on contents, if in good taste and not libelous or vindictive. Letters may be edited for grammar and style, length and content. All letters must be submitted exclusively to the *Vernal Express* and bear the full name, signature, phone number and address of the writer or writers. Letters for the sole purpose of expressing thanks to individuals or groups will not be printed in this forum. Submissions may be mailed to 54 N. Vernal Ave., Vernal, UT 84078; faxed to 435-789-8690 or sent by e-mail to editor@vernal.com The name or names of the persons submitting letters must appear on all published letters. Letters express the opinion of the writer or writers and are not necessarily the opinion of the *Vernal Express*.

State fair

Dear Editor,

I travel this nation over with the oilfield and have numerous occasions to visit fairs everywhere big and small. I must admit that I have enjoyed your county fair most of all!

It is better than most state fairs! There is such a rural feel with it yet big town entertainment. Good job Uintah County Commissioners.

Harold Palmer
Denver Colorado

AUC responds to Felter group

Dear Editor,

We would like to respond to an article published in the Vernal Express, dated Aug. 6, under the headline "Mixed-blood Utes petition for repeal or completion of UPA."

The affiliated members of the Ute Indian Tribe have the only legally-authorized, duly-appointed representatives to speak for them in the body of the Affiliated Ute Citizens and we have never relinquished our authority to anyone else. Further, the Ute Indian Tribe is not going to let anyone supersede its authority, especially someone who is no longer an enrolled member and has no asset interests in the Ute Indian Tribe.

Oranna Felter is misrepresenting herself by implying that she has some kind of authority to take actions on behalf of the mixed-bloods and full-bloods of the Ute Indian Tribe in regard to the Ute Partition Act of 1954 and she is misrepresenting the facts regarding the Ute Partition Act.

She may be the lead plaintiff in a federal lawsuit against the U.S. government but it does not seek to overturn the UPA, and she has her facts wrong. The Ute Partition Act was just that: a partition act, which was in fact completed by 1961.

The truth is the Uintah & Ouray Reservation Termination Act was never implemented by the Congress of the United States because the Ute Indian Tribe – mixed-blood and full-blood – did not agree to be terminated in 1964.

In a letter to Margaret Reed from Sen. Inouye, then chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, dated Feb. 7, 1991, he states: "Section 24 of the Act (UPA) did contemplate the "eventual" termination of the Ute Indian Tribe and directed the Secretary of the Interior to file an annual report with Congress advising of the progress in developing a plan for such purpose. In 1975, when the period of "termination" was in disrepute, the 1954 Act was amended to delete the provision requiring this annual report. There is no current proposal for termination of the Ute Indian Tribe."

Termination for the Ute Indian Tribe, which includes the original 490 affiliated members, was officially withdrawn by Congress in 1975.

The 490 original affiliated members of the Ute Indian Tribe, a federally recognized tribe, would like Oranna Felter or any of her followers to prove to us that we are congressionally terminated. The BIA has not been able to do it through their records and Sen. Inouye says it never happened and will not now happen. Perhaps she and her colleagues have the magic wand.

The National Congress of American Indians told Oranna's attorney, Dennis Chappabitty, in June of this year that in order to repeal the UPA they would have to petition the Ute Indian Tribe (the Ute Tribe Business Committee and the Affiliated Ute Citizens) to have the act repealed since they are the only ones who can do it. Thus far no such petition has been presented to either entity.

Denial is a terrible thing. Sooner or later Oranna and her purported followers will have to accept the fact that there is no such thing as "terminated Utes," "terminated mixed-bloods," or terminated anything from the Uintah and Ouray Reservation that she so proudly touts as being something factual.

No one is to blame for anything, including her misinformation. That is just the way it is. She and her colleagues need to get over it and give it a rest!

Arlene Gardner
Vernal
Vice President
Affiliated Ute Citizens of the Ute Indian Tribe

DWR wrong to shoot bear

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the shooting of the bear in Whiterocks [Canyon].

I am sickened by this story. The Division of Wildlife Resources has really crossed the ethical line here. They say that the bear could have been a "potential" threat to humans. Potential is the key word here!

It doesn't matter where you are, there is a potential threat to humans. When you are in the mountains not only are bears a potential threat, so are the cougars, moose, coyotes, badgers, etc. When dealing with animals you need some common sense to keep yourself from potential danger!

DWR said they had a hard time baiting the bear. Common sense says maybe the bear wasn't used to having his food baited! But he had to be killed because you think he was baited? Please!

They also say they had no choice but to shoot the bear because he didn't growl and hit the cage. Spare me!

I really think that the DWR officers involved with the shooting of the bear should be charged with animal cruelty and be fired for not following their own policies and procedures posted on their Web site.

I encourage everyone to read them at http://wildlife.utah.gov/fishing/reports.php, go to Rules, click on Administrative Rules, R657-33 Taking Bear; also Handling Black Bear Incidents, dated May 14, 2008. That can be found at http://wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings/info/may7.pdf

DWR went about this wrong. This bear should have been relocated. I think the trigger-happy officer must have wanted a bear rug.

The DWR killed an innocent animal out of spite and called it setting an example. What were you thinking? I hope the property owner sues the division.

Shame on the belligerent DWR!

Sheri Migliaccio
Roosevelt

Cost of Western Park events

Dear Editor,

I have a question? Why is every event at the Western Park oversold?

My son and I went to the Derby last week and paid our $10 for a ticket and could not see anything. I believe we were not the only ones who paid for something they could not see. People were parked all over and standing in the aisles and sitting on the steps in the grandstand. Either count the seats and sell tickets accordingly or put up more seating.

We made a $20 donation to the county fair but did not get to see anything. Could someone address this? Thanks

Wade Southam

DWR had to destroy bear

Dear Editor,

I have lived full-time in Whiterocks Canyon for eight years and was the only full-time resident until a couple years ago.

We have lived in harmony with all the animals of this canyon year round and have attempted to be good stewards of this beautiful land and respect all forms of flora and fauna that exist in this unique location. We never leave our garbage unsecured; we keep it a safe distance from our house and also have two dogs that assist in keeping bears a safe distance from our dwelling. This way the bear never has a food source, nor is it encouraged to come close to our cabin.

This is the responsible way to live in this environment.

I am saddened by the loss of this bear ("DWR destroys human-fed bear," Uintah Basin Standard, Aug. 19), however myself and the other neighbors that reside in the canyon either permanently or on a consistent basis all feel the same way and do not under any stretch of the imagination feel like we have been "deprived" of anything. We only wish that this could have been avoided.

Nature has no problems, bears have existed for millennia without any "help" from man, if we can just remember this we should be able to move past this crisis and not cause anymore.

Lewis Cooper
Whiterocks Canyon

Radiation vacation van

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the following people involved with the Radiation Vacation Van: Tri-County Health Department staff - Joe Shaffer and Natalie Feltch, and Radiation Vacation Board members - Jeri Merkley, Judy Kraft, Diane Morton, and Maryann Spainhower

These individuals have spent countless hours putting this program together, and you know what? It works!

This is such a wonderful service that helps we, as cancer patients, endure the ongoing treatments that never seem to have an end. I was a passenger of the Van for 30 trips, 5 days a week, for 6 weeks, and there was never a missed appointment. Danielle, Steven and Mary of the Vernal Shuttle need to be commended for supplying the transportation.

I hope this service will continue for patients in the future, as it is a "state of the art" service, and the medical staff from every location I went to were amazed that this area was providing this type of program, and I don't think there is anything that even compares to this service anywhere else in the state.

Thanks again to everyone involved in this program. I encourage everyone to get involved with either contributing to the program or using their services.

Donni Woods, Vernal